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ABSTRACT

A framework is needed to follow in implementing external degree programs. External degree programs meet the needs of individuals who cannot meet the time and space commitments of regular on-campus college classes. They differ from correspondence courses in the delivery system, student support services, and credibility of the learning experience. But in order to reach the needs of the diverse population, innovative methods of higher educational instruction and assessment need to be developed. Interested individuals need to seek the assistance of programs that have been in existence. In this way, new programs will be able to apply the experiences of other programs to their surroundings. The result will be more widespread initial support, and an emphasis on effective planning, and deemphasis on problem solving. (Author/KE)

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM

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PREFACE

The intent of this presentation, as the title indicates, is to provide a framework to follow in implementing external degree programs. The literature relative to the specific nature of external degree programs is quite limited. In addition, that reference material that is available tends to be broad in terms of theoretical scope. While such material will assist in the development of external degree programs, a guide to the application of these principles needs to be added to the literature.

When interest in the development of an external degree program arises within an instituion of higher education, resource people are sought for assistance. These individuals may be totally immersed in the coordination of their own external degree programs, and cannot devote the time to repeated explanations of the program concept. This presentation, then, can be used by interested individuals as a guide to planning and implementing their own programs.

INTRODUCTION

Correspondence courses, the forerunner to non-traditional higher education programs, have not met with the widespread approval of present degree-oriented institutions. These courses, advertised on matchbook covers and in magazines, have led the way for meeting the educational needs of individuals who cannot meet the time and space commitments of regular on-campus colleges classes. The philosophy of these courses and recent external degree programs are somewhat similar. That is, learning can take place outside of the classroom, and there are various ways of fulfilling this need. The major differences between external degree programs and correspondence courses are: 1) the delivery system; 2) student support services; and, 3) credibility of the learning experience.

In order to meet the needs of a diverse population, innovative methods of higher educational instruction and assessment need to be developed. "The establishment of non-resident educational programs in higher education has been receiving an increasing amount of attention in an effort to meet the diverse educational needs of the American public. Although a number of prototype systems exist that provide such instruction, there have been few attempts in this country to develop non-resident education systems that include both a flexible

delivery mode and quality instruction."[1]

The early 1970's saw a great surge in the interest in non-traditional study. This was partially prompted by a drop in enrollment in institutions of higher education, which meant that administrators had to seek new methods of meeting the needs of their potential students. Higher education has previously attracted a young student population, centering on those students who recently completed high school and are able to make a full-time commitment to their educational objectives. However, the past few years has shown a great interest in the development of lifelong learning patterns. People have become concerned about increasing their knowledge throughout their lives, and not terminating this process with a high school diploma or college degree. "It is also increasingly necessary, in an era of lifelong learning, for individuals to be able to formulate their own learning needs and goals. But these desirable learner processes and outcomes can be lost (for individuals and society) if they are not consciously identified and promoted."[2] This is a key concept in understanding the need for external degree programs, since such programs reach out to serve the needs of people who have previously been unable to work toward the completion of their learning needs

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[1]John L. Yeager and Diane J. Davis, "The Development of an Instructional Delivery System for External Studies in Higher Education" (Pittsburgh, 1973, ED081318), p. 1.

[2]Michael Merian, "Beyond the Carnegie Commission: A Policy Study Guide to Space/Time/Credit-Preference Higher Learning" (Syracuse, 1972), ED071576), p. 23.

and goals. Cyril O. Houle, who has completed a thorough investigation of the development of many external degree programs, indicates his data suggests "that unless alternatives—among them the external degree—are provided, the deprivation of higher education will increase during the remainder of this century."[3]

Eric Ashby, in describing the change in educational structures, indicates there are four important revolutions relating to the education of man:

1. The shifting of the task of educating the young in a society to a select group of adults.
2. Teachers began using the written word, instead of oral communication as the vehicle of instruction.
3. The introduction and subsequent wide usage of printed material for education.
4. The use of electronic equipment such as television, computers, and tape recorders to aid in information transfer.[4]

These four revolutions are all components of the development of an effective external degree program. Innovative methods of instruction are needed to make the program successful; and, the program should be developed to attract adults who have diverse educational needs. "Finally, motivation to provide the external degree has arisen from the manifest needs of three diverse kinds of people in modern society: the talented, those who missed a first chance at higher education

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[3]Cyril O. Houle, The External Degree (San Francisco, 1973) p. 62.

[4]Eric Ashby, "Machines, Understanding, and Learning: Reflections on Technology in Education," in The Graduate Journal Vol. 7 (1967).

and wish a second; and those who previously were not thought intellectually able to undertake college work."[5]

DEFINING AN EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM

An external degree, one type of non-traditional study, can be defined as "one awarded to an individual on the basis of some program of preparation (devised either by himself or by an educational institution) which is not centered on traditional patterns of residential collegiate or university study."[6] This definition indicates that an external degree program must be flexible enough to work with an individual in the development of his own educational plan, to meet the needs of his goals and objectives. The Commission on Non-Traditional Study has expanded this definition to include the credibility of diverse educational backgrounds:

> It is an attitude that puts the student first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's need than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity, and de-emphasizes time and space or even course requirements in favor of competence and, where applicable, performance.[7]

Since time and space are two important reasons why people

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[5]Houle, The External Degree, p. 46.

[6]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[7]Commission on Non-Traditional Study, in "Introduction," K. Patricia Cross, Journal of Higher Education, Volume XLIV (June 1973), No. 6, 418.

need external degree programs, Valentine has referred to this as "catered instruction."[8] That is, the student receives his instruction when and where he happens to be. The emphasis of all of these definitions indicates a need for the commitment of the institution to adjusting to the needs of the individual, and not the individual adjusting to the institution.

PHILOSOPHY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education has philosophically indicated a need to meet the needs of the entire population. However, such a plan exists only in theory. The full-time employee with family responsibilities, the housewife, the prisoner, the handicapped, and those living in remote areas have not traditionally seen higher educational programs as meeting their needs. The significance of a college or university degree, whether for personal or professional growth, is seen as Cyril O. Houle explains:

> However sophisticated or naive the discussion of such a degree as a solution to the malaise of higher education may appear, at the heart of its advocacy lies the deep and perennial egalitarianism of the American ethos, rooted in the belief that the individual should have as much education as he needs or wishes to develop his potentialities. And, in that ethos, the college or university degree is the tangible manifestation that learning has taken place.[9]

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[8]John A. Valentine, "The External Degree," Liberal Education Volume LVIII, No. 2 (May 1972) 205.

[9]Houle, The External Degree, p. 64.

If higher education is going to meet the standards established by its own philosophy, innovative programs need to be developed to meet the needs of the non-traditional student. The external degree is one type of non-traditional study that is needed to fulfill the demands of our diverse population.

RECENT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS FOR THE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT

Institutions of higher education, in working toward increasing services and students, have developed innovative methods for giving credence to many types of learning experiences.

University Without Walls Concept

The "University Without Walls" concept has brought many questions to the minds of educators. There has been much concern regarding the maintaining of standards established for internal students. The University of London, in dealing with this matter, indicates that "the principle guarantee of equivalence of standard is that the same academic authorities are responsible for the preparation and approval of syllabuses for internal and external students and for the conduct of their examinations."[10] Essentially, the quality of instruction re-

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[10]Houle, The External Degree, p. 23.

ceived by both internal and external students can be equated. This is an important factor in program credibility, since the maintaining of quality instruction will be a determinant of the success of the program.

There are eight organizing concepts which are involved in the University Without Walls. (While the previous reference to this topic indicated a concept, the reference here is to the university by this name.) Since these concepts are all influential factors in the development of an external degree program, they are described briefly as follows:

1. A mix of ages, integrating personal life experiences and theoretical knowledge, would benefit all people seeking a college education.
2. Students need to be involved in the design and governance of colleges.
3. Students need help in achieving confidence in setting and pursuing their educational goals.
4. Educational programs need to be adapted to the individual student.
5. Experiential learning needs to be incorporated with other instructional materials.
6. Contributions from persons outside the regular educational institution need to be included in the experience.
7. The student's education may be enhanced if he can be part of the "mix" of more than one educational institution.
8. New approaches to evaluation need to be developed.[11]

In addition to the establishment of sub-institutions or separate ones to work with non-traditional students, certain

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[11]Houle, The External Degree, pp. 114-116.

methods have been developed to credential life experience and previous academic involvement.

Credit by Examination

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) has led the way in this direction toward appraising previous life experiences. The program allows individuals to take standardized examinations relevant to certain course and content areas. These areas may include English Composition, General Psychology, the humanities area, and the natural science area. "One of the major motivations for initiating new learning opportunities is to enhance equality of access to higher learning, and to the credentials that increasingly serve as passports to job opportunities. There can be little doubt that Space/Time-Preference programs——particularly the College Level Examination Program——will result in greater justice in determining who knows what."[12] The wide experiential backgrounds of adults need to be considered in establishing external degree programs and alternatives to credits through course completion. "Credit by examination plays a large role in time-shortened degree programs,"[13] and this may be a deciding factor for people considering a degree, but are presently employed in another profession. In establishing realistic goals and objectives,

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[12]Merian, p. 26.

[13]Janet Ruyle and Lucy Ann Geiselman, "Non-Traditional Opportunities and Programs," Planning Non-Traditional Programs, ed. K. P. Cross, John R. Valley & Associates (San Francisco, 1974) p. 66.

an individual has to be concerned with the amount of time necessary to reach these goals. If the time appears to be too extensive, one may forfeit the entire idea of a college degree——especially if the degree requirements are rigid, and include areas within which the individual may have some previous experience.

In terms of flexibility, credit by examination procedures are still fairly rigid. An individual, with a wide experiential background, may have not developed the specific theoretical knowledge necessary to receive a sufficient score for credit in a particular area. This places the individual at a disadvantage, and other opportunities need to be available to overcome this.

Subjective Assessment of Prior Learning

In assessing prior learning, several colleges have developed policies for the evaluation of these experiences. "While without an explicit rationale, these procedures seem to have as their objective the identification of all kinds and amounts of learning that may be related to degree requirements. They reflect the belief that such learning occurs in a wide sweep of human experience. . . "[14]

Credit by examination, and by evaluation of prior experience, speak to the topic of the institution adapting to the needs

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[14]John R. Valle, "The External Degree: Recent Developments" Findings (ETS), Volume 1 No. 3 (1974), 7.

of the individual student involved. In this way, for example, students who have been in the Army can obtain credits for courses they enrolled in relative to their particular job assignment. Those people who have taken correspondence courses can have their experiences evaluated, and this will assist them in obtaining their educational objectives. The evaluation of these experiences has been, and should continue to be, evaluated by faculty members at the degree-granting institution. In this way, a student and the faculty member can determine what credit the student can receive for his prior learning, and what additional work he must complete in a certain area to receive supplemental credit.

For instance, a man may have been involved in a fundamental math course throughout the service, but never received credit for that work. A faculty member at the degree-granting institution may discuss the experience with the student, and/or may test him on areas within that experience. Then, if it is determined that the student still has a deficiency in math related to percentages, the instructor may recommend that the student complete assignments relevant to this. The student may then receive credit for a fundamental math course. Such flexibility is necessary when individualizing a program for the non-traditional student.

Experiential Learning

Beyond the awarding of credit for prior learning, an additional factor which may be involved is experiential learn-

ing. A student may be employed full-time at a position which is relevant to his academic studies. Taking advantage of this opportunity to expand the student's knowledge can indicate to the student the relevance of his course work. "One of the unique aspects of evaluating experiential learning can be the initial examination of one's own values and their re-examination when they are challenged by new experiences. As values are tested by reality, many of them are retained and strengthened while some are changed. A far greater awareness emerges and, in some cases, respect for the values of others and the practical reasons behind them."[15]

The applicability of the academic work to the individual's profession may determine if the student will or will not continue his education. "If it is to have academic legitimacy, experiential learning should produce some type of intellectual growth. It should include problem-solving, objective-setting, and decision-making. It should be a blending of the cognitive with the effective, and utilize a person's own particular background and skills."[16] This is where higher education should be turning its attention, both with internal and external degree programs.

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[15]William G. Thomas, "Experimental Education—A Rationale for Creative Problem Solving," Education and Urban Society, Volume VII, No. 2 (February, 1975), 179.

[16]Ibid., p. 175.

General Educational Development Test

A group of people who may be interested in higher education, but feel they do not have the academic background for such, are those people who have not completed high school. It is crucial for the external degree program to deal with this type of student as well. "An unknown number of people who have not completed high school might also be interested and capable of securing an external degree, and research suggests that it may be possible to recruit a substantial number of people from this group."[17] There are many reasons why individuals have not completed high school, and only some of these may be related to an inability to complete the academic work. There are a vast number of people who were forced to leave school for financial and/or personal reasons. One way of integrating these people into post-secondary education is through an external degree program. A General Educational Development (GED) test may be suggested to determine if the student has the motivation and capabilities needed to complete his objective. This would give the student the equivalent of a high school diploma, and may assure him of his ability to achieve a college degree. Another alternative relative to this would be the implementation of a policy at the state level, to include the issuance of a GED diploma upon the completion of a certain number of college credits. This would provide additional credibility to the student's achievements. Studies have

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[17]Houle, The External Degree, p. 16.

can often not handle all of the requests for enrollment in the program at any given time. Their enrollments far exceed original projections; yet, it is difficult to turn students away--especially those with a tremendously high degree of motivation. However, priority needs to be assigned to quality services, and this may mean limiting the enrollment. Individuals who have been interested in an external degree are often not aware of how to get involved in such programs, or even how to find out that they do exist. As Allen Tough suggests:

> Many perons would welcome more and better help with their self-planned learning. . . Inadequate help results in countless wasted hours, inappropriate projects, and inefficient methods. Because of the lack of available help, the person may not even start the learning project, in the first place. Yet, without learning, how can he deal effectively with his job, home, family, recreational activities, and finnances?"[19]

Individuals who have had little or no contact with higher education may find it difficult to find out where resources to meet their needs really are. Higher education, by catering to a select group has provided an invisible wall for individuals who do not fit into this category. Community resources are usually accessible, and higher education needs to take advantage of these in order to increase their potential, and decrease the duplication of services. "If the new forms and patterns of higher education are successful, they could very

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[19]Allen Tough, The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning, Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1971), pp. 104,115.

well develop a capacity that would totally obviate the need for 'new places.'"[20] For example, the public libraries can be used not only for individual study, but for group projects, examination, and regular library services. Such projects increase public awareness of higher education, and in turn increases public interest.

The Proposal for the Pennsylvania Open College

The Proposal for the Pennsylvania Open College has responded to the need for external and non-traditional degree programs by preparing an educational plan centerd on responding to the needs of our diverse population. The Plan includes the identification of these needs:

1. To inventory and coordinate human, physical and other resources.
2. To seek out and encourage those who have been denied or have failed to recognize the benefits of self-enhancement through learning.
3. To aid individuals to define and clarify their hopes and aspirations so as to enable them to attain at their own pace their specific educational objectives.[21]

The identification of this need for external degree programs, and the proposals for working toward development of such program are essential. The proposal for The Pennsylvania Open College is reaching into the community to serve the

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[20] Merian, p. 3.

[21] "Proposal: The Pennsylvania Open College," an unpublished paper.

needs of diverse populations. They are taking an active role in developing their potential as lifelong learning centers. External degree programs need to focus in this direction, also. The potential for development of non-traditional programs is infinite, and recommendations such as the Pennsylvania Open College are fundamental to the program acceptance and credibility.

Barriers to Higher Education Involvement

The invisible wall in front of higher education is only one barrier which prevents the more active involvement of adults in post-secondary education. There are many real physical, time, and space barriers which stand in the way of individuals seeking higher education.

In further identifying the need for external degree programs, the following table illustrates the results of a study relative to the barriers preventing involvement in higher education by some individuals. It is essential to look beyond these barriers toward the resolution of these difficulties.

BARRIERS TO LEARNING*

Barriers	% of Would-be Learners
Cost, including books, learning materials, child care, transportation, as well as tuition	53%
Not enough Time	46%
Don't want to go to school full-time	35%
Home responsibilities	28%
Job responsibilities	28%
Amount of time required to complete degree	21%
Afraid that I'm too old to begin	17%
Courses aren't scheduled when I can attend	16%
No information about places or people offering what I want	16%
Strict attendance requirements	15%
Low grades in past, not confident of my ability	12%
Courses I want don't seem to be available	12%
No child care	11%
Too much red tape in getting enrolled	10%
Not enough energy and stamina	9%
Don't enjoy studying	9%
No transportation	8%
No place to study or practice	7%
Don't meet requirements to begin program	6%
Tired of school, tired of classrooms	6%
No way to get credit for a degree	5%
Don't know what to learn or what it would lead to	5%
Hesitate to seem too ambitious	3%
Friends or family don't like the idea	3%
Other barrier	2%
No response	3%

Note: Percentages do not total 100 because of multiple responses

* [22] Abraham Carp, Richard Peterson and Pamela Roelfs, "Adult Learning Interests and Experiences," Planning Non-Traditional Programs, ed. K. Patricia Cross, John R. Valley & Associates (San Francisco, 1974) p. 46.

This table indicates a vast potential for non-traditional education. The external degree can work to eliminate many of these barriers. The only barriers which cannot be erased are those relating to lack of individual motivation and desire. Higher education cannot be forced on individuals who are not sure of their goals for themselves; since, if they are not sure that entering an external degree program is exactly what they want, they will not succeed in the program.

The internal degree programs can also do much to eliminate barriers to higher education. Valentine illustrates the ways in which higher education can increase its potential:

> They can put part-time study on a more equal footing with full-time study, and do their share in breaking down prevailing stereotypes of full-time study as somehow more respectable than part-time study. They can help make information more readily available to adults. They can bring schedules, places, requirements, content, methods, purposes, and philosophies more in line with the circumstances and attitudes of adults.[23]

While this may increase the potential for internal degree programs, the external degree programs will certainly not suffer. Such a move would merely give more options to individuals seeking a college degree. As the previous table indicates, there are many people who would not be able to attend on-campus classes, regardless of more liberal scheduling. "The concept that this is the accumulation of credit hours that fulfills degree requirements handicaps those whose lives dictate mobility too

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[23]John A. Valentine, "The Liberal Arts College and The Experienced Learner," The College Board Review, No. 93 (Fall 1974), p. 6.

great to collect sufficient credits at a single degree-granting institution——servicemen, business transfers, wives leaving college before the completion of their own degree."[24] This is where the need for the external degree program begins to take form. These individuals need more than an extension of flexibility of existing programs. Also, "certainly the research indicates that there are enough people who do want the traditional academic disciplines to make non-traditional delivery of traditional education quite worthwhile."[25]

IDENTIFYING TARGET AUDIENCES FOR EXTERNAL DEGREES

Many questions need to be raised before an institution or group of individuals plan an external degree program. A fundamental question is "Who do we want to serve through this program?" Since it has already been indicated that the potential for external degree programs is almost unlimited, it is necessary to formulate specific ideas relative to the specific people you intend to serve. The program should be tailored to this group of individuals, and an indication of the group to be served is necessary for instructors who will develop course materials. For instance, if the program is planned for handicapped students (including homebound adults, prisoners, etc.), then a course cannot include field trips as a requirement.

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[24] K. Patricia Cross and J. Quentin Jones, "Problems of Access," Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, ed. Samuel Gould and K. Patricia Cross (San Francisco, 1972), p. 43.

[25] K. Patricia Cross, John R. Valley & Associates, Planning Non-Traditional Programs (San Francisco, 1974), p. 3.

Cyril O. Houle has indicated that the development of external degree programs has usually taken one of the following directions: 1) Providing the program for those adults who were earlier unable to enroll; 2) Providing the program for the meritocratic elite; and 3) To provide the program for the educationally disadvantaged.[26]

The question now is——Would it be possible to structure an external degree program to meet the needs of all three groups indicated above? With the proper equipment, competent instructors, and student support service personnel, such a program is possible. Houle indicates that "the most promising category is those people who have already signified an interest in college study and some aptitude for it but who, for some reason, have not yet completed degree work."[27]

An additional category which might be added are those individuals who <u>are</u> able to attend on-campus classes, but want an external degree program or course for convenience. Once an external degree program is incorporated with an existing institution, some on-campus students will become aware of the program and want to enroll. Should such students be given the option of an external degree? This may present problems in terms of on-campus faculty. If a student, who normally

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[26]Cyril O. Houle, "The Potential Audience for the External Degree," <u>Journal of Higher Education</u>, Volume XLIV, (June 1973) pp. 429-430.

[27]Houle, <u>The External Degree</u>, p. 16.

could attend on-campus classes, enrolls in an external degree program, faculty begin to correlate this with the decline of enrollment in their on-campus courses. Job security for faculty may then become a main concern. If they are not receiving sufficient registrations to merit the offering of their on-campus courses, they may not have their contract or teaching agreement renewed.

In order for the establishment of external degree programs to meet with acceptance, it is important to determine exactly who the program is trying to reach and admission criteria which will be employed. "As open admission has been adopted by formerly limited-access institutions and as community colleges have proliferated, the group of new students who have been attracted has been intensively studied. . . ."[28] While this indicates a trend for internal degree programs, it is relevant to external programs as well. The establishment of criteria for admission is important to the credibility of the program, and will have a bearing on the success of each student who enrolls.

INITIAL PLANNING FOR AN EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM

Through an extensive planning process, the full potential for the external degree program will be maximized. The planning time will vary with staff resources, interest, and con-

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[28]Houle, The External Degree, p. 85.

centration of effort. However, development should not begin before the plan has been finalized, approved, and accepted. That is, if the program is being planned within the confines of an existing internal degree program.

Those individuals who are planning an external degree program completely independent of any existing higher education institution need, at the initial planning stage, to investigate accreditation possibilities and procedures. This is a crucial area of concern, which affects the entire legitimacy and higher education acceptance of the program. If accreditation is not received, students will be skeptical of the validity of the program and the degree they receive.

Program Structure: Dependent or Independent

The initial planning stage may appear to be less complicated if the program is developed independently of a pre-established internal degree program. However, this presents the major difficulty of accreditation. The goals of an external degree program are dependent on the relationship with an internal degree program. Pre-established constraints for internal degree program have a great effect on the development of external degree programs considered within the same framework. While this may limit the immediate ability to be entirely flexible, it appears that programs which are related to internal degrees are more readily accredited, and show more promise for long-range success.

On the other hand, independent external degree programs

face an entire range of difficulties associated with planning and development, because of this independence. These struggles may range from establishing an entirely new set of policies and procedures, to hiring of highly-qualified faculty and staff, obtaining of funds, and eventually the procurement of community acceptance and support. The initial problems are extremely important to overcome, and in attempting to achieve this, the developmental aspect of the program will suffer. The planners will be focusing on the problem areas, and overlooking the opportunity area of fundamental program component development.

"The entire enterprise will be successful only if a balance is maintained: individuals with non-traditional learning must be permitted to gain recognition; at the same time, respectable standards for recognition must be upheld."[29] The recommendation, then, is for the external degree program to be planned and developed in conjunction with an existing internal degree program. Using this structure, the program will not have to re-invent the wheel in terms of the duplication of already existing services (i.e. tutoring, counseling). Thus, this presentation on planning, development, and implementation is founded on the assumption that the program will be more easily facilitated and accepted, when it is offered within the realm of an existing structure.

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[29]Ernest W. Kimmel, "Problems of Recognition," Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, ed. Samuel B. Gould and K. Patricia Cross (San Francisco, 1972), pp. 65-6.

Providing Program Leadership

If the external degree program is planned within an existing institution, one individual or group of individuals should have the responsibility of planning. Planning and development will be more easily facilitated if one individual is responsible for the program. This does not, however, mean that this coordinator will be the sole component in the planning process. This individual should be responsible for the addition of any consultants and resource personnel when necessary. His coordination may be shaped by the role he assumes, and has previously assumed within the institution. The individual called upon to fulfill this service should come from within the institution. In addition, the inter-institutional response to this leader will also be affected by his previous ability to work closely and successfully in other capacities within the institution.

The leadership and responsibility for the external degree program need to be centralized in one office area. Those people within the institution, and community members who have valuable input, need to know where to go to discuss their innovative ideas, and offer their assistance. The gathering of support from all elements of the population is extremely essential to program acceptance.

Another important person needed in the program at this initial planning phase is the person responsible for student selection, and ultimately the maintenance of highly-qualified students in the program. Ideally, the individual chosen for this position should receive the approval of all individuals

closely integrated with the planning process. If certain inter-institutional staff members feel the individual is qualified, his over-all acceptance will be more readily achieved. As with the program coordinator, acceptance of the program as a whole will be more easily facilitated if the person is drawn from the resources within the college community. Also, the degree to which his ideas have previously been accepted will introduce an additional factor in program acceptance.

This individual, with responsibility for student selection, must be selected during the planning phase to insure a continuity of program goals and objectives. The individual with a counseling-orientation will have a significant advantage in terms of developing meaningful relationships with the students. This individual, as well as other external degree staff members, needs to be flexible enough to provide support for the non-traditional student.

Defining Program Goals and Objectives

Before development of the external system is inaugurated, goals and objectives must be clearly stated and the consequences of these realized. The integration of the external degree program into the existing instituion is a major point which needs to be considered. While internal constraints and conflicts may hinder progress initially, the advantages to the student are overwhelming. "Non-traditional programs vary from highly individualized subject matter to the quite traditional.

Flexibility in planning will allow a single institution to use the entire range. In any case, it is clear that is is not enough to pack up a sequence of courses, carry them off-campus and grant degrees. Goal-oriented programs must be planned either with the individual student or with the group."[30]

The goals and objectives of the program will need to include not only the type of audience the program will endeavor to serve, but also the indication of the exact number of students the program can work effectively with at any given time. If an initial objective of the program is to serve a certain number of students, then enrollment should be held at that level. In establishing instructional materials and student support services for this projected enrollment, it is essential to have a sufficient supply of materials available at all times. The supply of materials (especially those of an expendable nature) should be maintained at least at the maximum level of enrollment.

While it may be difficult to explain the temporary stop in enrollments to prospective students, the consequences of continued enrollment beyond the number anticipated and planned for would be severely detrimental to the entire system. Students can be placed on waiting lists, and then accepted as space becomes available. This is not an extremely desirable alter-

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[30]Barbara H. Mickey, "Designing the External Degree Program," Journal of Higher Education, Volume XLIV (June 1973) No. 6, 456.

native, but it is certainly more appropriate than endangering the credibility of the entire program system. The quality control within the program will insure the continuation of the system, and this component is especially significant in the early enrollment stages. During this time, the external degree program system will be thoroughly studied by many people within the institution. Those keeping the closest watch over the program will be those individuals who would not support the development of the program. Is is even possible for these individuals to place the program personnel in a very defensive position, and this does not tend to promote inter-institutional harmony.

This should provide a word of caution for those individuals considering the planning of an external degree program. The strict adherence to the originally stated goals and objectives is of the utmost importance. Any deviation from these will elicit immediate criticism from program skeptics.

Surveying Local Needs

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has indicated that "knowing how many students American higher education will be expected to serve in various types of colleges and universities is absolutely fundamental to intelligent planning."[31] This notion was applied briefly in the above passages as it relates to external degree programs, and specifically the setting

[31]Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. The Future of Higher Education: How To Get There From Here. (Berkeley, 1972), p. 2.

of program goals and objectives. In terms of determining numbers of projected enrollments, it is essential to categorize these potential students by academic program into which they will seek admission. A large scale external degree program should not be developed initially, if there is no research to indicate the need for such a large program exists.

> Another fact that institutional planners should keep in mind from these data is that adults differ substantially in their learning interests and activities, according to sex, age, previous education, occupation, race, size of ocmmunity, and even region of the country. Consequently, national statistics on the overall market for further education should be interpreted in light of local conditions and the distinctive constituencies of individual institutions and agencies.[32]

This passage denotes that initial planning should include a survey of the local needs, as well as national projections on higher education. The local conditions and individuals interested in the external degree program will vary with regard to their place of residence. For example, one area may have a need for qualified accountants, and this may be a good program to initiate in the external degree program. However, in another state, there may not be a need for accountants, and planning must therefore evaluate the local conditions before development begins.

Flexibility and Student Mobility

Flexibility of the internal program will assist the

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[32]Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs, p. 51.

implementation of an external program. Howard R. Bowen indicates that "external and resident degree program should be considered as comparable in purpose and quality. Students should be able to move freely from one to the other for part of all of their studies. The financing of the two programs, then, should be similar."[33] This turning of attention toward the student's needs is fundamental to program success. A student must be able to transfer credits to another institution, participate in internal program courses when possible, and obtain his degree without delay or question. The ability of the program to be easily integrated into other existing institutions will be noted by the ease with which students transfer.

Areas of Resistance

The external degree program, no matter how ideally well-planned it may be, will receive resistance from one area or another. However, before even these criticisms are levied, resistance will occur before planning is initiated. In order to implement the external degree program, there are certain areas of resistance which may be met. One study of 1184 institutions indicated encounters with the following difficulties:

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[33]Howard R. Bowen, "Financing the External Degree," Journal of Higher Education, Volume XLIV (June 1973) No. 6, 487.

PROBLEM AREA	PER CENT *
Lack of funds	41%
Difficulty in assessing nonclassroom learning	40%
Concern about academic standards	34%
Faculty resistance	32%
Budget based on FTE units	25%
Lack of interest within the institution	21%
Suspicion of passing fad	20%
Lack of approved examination or other assessment techniques	19%
Acceptance of graduates into advanced education or graduate schools	18%
No evident demand or need for such developments	15%
Recruitment of appropriate faculty	13%
Recruitment of students	12%
Inadequate preparation of students	12%
Lack of interest among constituency	12%
Accreditation	10%
Licensing and certification	9%
Employers' concerns about graduates' qualifications	7%
Other	6%
No Response (no problems?)	15%

* [34]Ruyle and Geiselman, p. 87.

Key Focal Points

This table indicates the key areas of concern, not only of those involved in planning and developing external degree programs, but also the concerns expressed by those who will resist any such program. The four areas of greatest concern include: lack of funds, difficulty in assessing non-classroom learning, concern about academic standards, and faculty resistance. Solid planning can alleviate these problems before they occur. That is, the plan for the external degree program must include a way for the program to be self-sustaining. While initial costs may be high, the revenue gained from the program implementation should resolve this problem area. In assessing non-classroom learning, the faculty needs to be updated on new instructional methods and delivery systems for these methods. This problem area is closely tied to the concern about academic standards, since the instructors must maintain these standards through their course development. Faculty resistance can also be dealt with through a gradual integration of the program system into the institution, and by specifically defining the program goals and objectives. This brief description of the problem areas and methods for resolving these concern is not complete. A further attempt to cope with these concern areas is integrated within the developmental stages of the program.

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Accreditation

The development of external degree programs, if they are to be accepted and successful, must include a consideration of accreditation. If the program is integrated with an existing internal degree program, accreditation will be an easier step for the program. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has devised standards for accrediting external degree programs, which requires the institution to "develop specific politics and guidelines which include admission policies with special attention to the age and maturity of the individual, his prior educational achievement and vocational and avocational experiences and to his goals and objectives."[35]

Establishing Standards

The adoption of similar standards should be considered across the nation, in order to assure quality instruction in external degree programs. Through the establishment of set standards the student will know his instruction is of the highest quality, and the experience will have validity and credibility. The student should be able to briefly examine any external degree program and note its accreditation.. He must feel confident that the standards for accreditation have been met, and that the credibility of his external degree can

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[35]The Southern Association of Colleges and School, "Standards of The College Delegate Assembly of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools," (Atlanta, 1971, HE003435).

be equated with that of a similar internal degree program. If this is not a reality, the program should not be accredited.

> Those involved in external degree program recognize that problems of supervision and control must be worked out and must be continuing concerns so that quality is maintained. Their awareness of this need injects an element of caution into external degree programs that may prove beneficial in changing them from generally well-received experiments into acceptable alternatives to the traditional residential college experience.[36]

The development of external degree programs as "experiments" needs to be eliminated. Programs have existed and been successful within the past few years, and if external programs continue to be sold to faculty and administrators as "experiments," acceptance may be based on this factor, rather than the validity of the program itself. The "integration of a non-traditional program into the normal operation of a college or university requires a great deal of tact and care so that the proper balance can be struck between freedom and responsibility both at the beginning and as it continues."[37] This integration of the program into the existing institution also assures the college personnel that the program is permanent, and not just another "experiment." Their involvement in the program may be contingent on the resolving of this idea.

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[36]Carol H. Shulman, "A Look at External Degree Structures," (November, 1972), ED068070 .

[37]Commission on Non-Traditional Study, Diversity By Design (San Francisco, 1974), p. 74.

Degree Programs to be Offered

Development of the plan for the external degree program must also be concerned with the specific degree programs, certificate programs, and special interest courses it will offer. Caution should be used in initial course development, since a degree program which initially seems that it will attract many students may eventually not be relevant. Therefore, it is essential to proceed a few courses at a time, so that efforts are not spent on such projects. Also, "once a program gets under way, it will develop a life and clientele of its own. And in that emerging clientele, new and sometimes surprising clusters of people will emerge from both the adult and youth clienteles who find that the external degree helps them meet their needs for an organized and meaningful comprehensive learning program."[38] The program will eventually determine its own needs, and people working within the program will recognize these needs and begin to formulate plans for meeting the needs. Some of the most promising suggestions for program improvement will come from the students, who are immersed in the program at a unique level. In this way, they can more objectively assess the program's strengths and weaknesses.

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[38]Cyril O. Houle, The External Degree, p. 86.

Program Flexibility

In reaching out to meet the needs of individual students in an external degree program, it is important to consider the equipment necessary to carry out this idea. "Perhaps the only similarity is that all of the programs, plans, and proposals seek to promote learning beyond campus classrooms, while many of them are flexible as to when and how a student learns."[39] The necessary flexibility of when and how a student learns will become increasingly significant as the program reaches to attract the prospective students who are homebound, and cannot possible leave their surrounds for any type of instruction on a regularly scheduled basis. Any external degree program must be able to incorporate the severely handicapped individual (i.e. homebound, physically handicapped, prisoner) into a course or degree program. This flexibility may include the student tape recording the research topics, rather than the writing and typing of such projects——which would be impossible for the handicapped person to do. Essentially, course development as well as student services, should be flexible enough to adapt to these particular student needs. "This greater flexibility would be an expression of awareness that learning can and does take place in different ways for different people, and that to continue to provide only one form of instruction and recognition is to be wasteful of the country's richest

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[39]Michael Marien, "Beyond the Carnegie Commission: A Policy Study Guide To Space/Time/Credit-Preference Higher Learning," (August, 1972, ED071576).

resources."[40] Faculty who do not agree with this philosophy should not become involved in course development or instruction, since their bias would certainly affect the flexibility and quality of their course materials.

The Financial Component

As Ruyle and Geiselman pointed out earlier, the cost factor was the most often cited area of concern in external degree program development. However, K. Patricia Cross points out that of the programs studied, "the largest number (41 percent) say that the costs of the external degree program are generally comparable to those experienced in their conventional programs. Twenty-one percent say that the external degree is costing them more money, and about the same proportion (23 percent) claim that they can offer their degree externally for less money than their internal degree."[41]

To gather total institutional support for a new external degree program is quite difficult——or nearly impossible. Any lack of support indicates an even more difficult time in securing the necessary funds. In recent years, some state and federal agencies have offered grants for the development of external degree programs. These have presented the financial

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[40]Rodney T. Hartnett, "Non-Traditional Study: An Overview," in Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, ed. Samuel Gould and K. Patricia Cross (San Francisco, 1972), p. 37.

[41]Commission on Non-Traditional Study, in "Introduction," K. Patricia Cross, Journal of Higher Education, Volume XLIV (June, 1973), No. 6, 421-2.

support an institution may have felt it needed in order to consider the development of such a program. When such grant money is used, acceptance at the institution responsible for development is bound to be greater. It would be extremely difficult for an institution of higher education to pass up such an opportunity——especially since the institutional faculty members will reap the benefits, by accepting more students at additional pay.

To develop an effective program, the cost of initial development is crucial. The quality of instruction and instructional materials must take precedence over the concern for the cost factor. While this may appear to be ideal only in theory, the quality of the program will decrease as the elimination of quality instructional materials increases. "All auxiliary services——library, laboratory, counseling, and other learning facilities——must be calculated in terms of quality as the program defines it, not by the generalized indices used for conventional activities."[42]

The one-to-one relationship between student and faculty is crucial to continuation of student motivation throughout the course or degree program. Student motivation is contingent on the development of an active learning process. Such a one-to-one relationship may be forfeited if the necessary multi-media instructional materials are not available. The student

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[42]Cyril O. Houle, The External Degree, p. 134.

support services, such as community libraries and counseling, will also mean a financial investment for the program, since there are often new innovations in the instructional delivery system, and cannot be incorporated into existing structures.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Flexibility of the Faculty

External degree programs need on-campus faculty members who are innovative and can adapt to individual student needs. These faculty members need to be integrated into the external degree program at the initiation of planning. They should be involved in providing input at this stage, and should be totally involved in the course development process. If academic standards are to be maintained, the faculty will need to include all the components of on-campus instruction——but packaged and delivered in a totally unique way. "Faculty who are flexible in teaching methods, who are sensitive to student needs in the classroom, who can adjust communication pathways as needed, who are willing to consider new kinds of content and to organize traditional content in new contexts, seem most successful in non-traditional programs."[43] The involvement of community resource people as well at the planning and developing stages, is also crucial. These individuals may be

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[43]Barbara H. Mickey, "Designing the External Degree Program," Journal of Higher Education, Volume XLIV (June 1973) No. 6, 457.

needed to assess the competency of external degree students completing internships within area agencies; and, their input as to degree requirements and components needs to be included. Faculty members and community resource individuals should be encouraged to work together, to assure the development of a comprehensive plan for students entering the external degree program in their instructional area.

In-Service Faculty Programs

It may be substantially important to offer an in-service program for prospective external degree program faculty. This would include the description and detailed outline needed to develop a course, offer suggestions for possible innovations to employ, and an explanation of the type of student the program is expected to serve. "Small informal groups of faculty members gathered to examine the issues and to share the growing body of literature on non-traditional programs are extremely helpful."[44] The entire developmental phase of the external degree program will take considerable time, and this phase should not be hastily completed, since the success of the program rests on the effects of good development.

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[44]Barbara H. Mickey, pp. 454-5.

FACULTY INVOLVEMENT IN COURSE DEVELOPMENT

In order for a faculty member to be successful in the development of his course instructional materials, certain factors need to be considered. The instructor's ability to be flexible and innovative will be evidenced by his preparation of course instructional materials. "To the degree that the teacher becomes a facilitator and a vibrant learner——to that degree will learning become enhanced. He who teaches least teaches best."[45] Such a philosophy increases the potential for the facilitation of learning through non-traditional methods.

Flexibility of Course Instructional Materials

Developing the syllabus for an external degree program is only the beginning. Faculty members, through this program, must be prepared to answer questions on any given part of the course material at any time. Since students will be self-paced, he may have students working on the first assignment, and at the same time have students completing the final course assignment.

The faculty member, in developing his course materials, will promote his own learning style. However, this limits the continual use of the same course material. Every new faculty member should not have to develop an entire course be-

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[45]Pine, "Existential Teaching and Learning," p. 24.

fore participating in the external degree program. The course should be flexible enough to permit the widespread use of materials, not only at the institution which developed the program, but at other institutions who are providing an external degree program. There is no need to re-invent the wheel.

Printed Instructional Materials

A faculty member who is developing an external degree course should choose his text books carefully; especially since the books should not be ones which will soon be outdated and of little relevance. A study guide should be prepared by the faculty member which corresponds to the other instructional materials for the course. To maximize the use of the course materials, an instructor might consider the use of reference books from the library in place of a course text. This would add flexibility and make the course more economical for the student. The study guide could then be developed to correspond to any reference books which the student may choose.

The study guide should include an introduction explaining materials to be covered and coure objectives. The instructor should also include the method of of evaluation of student achievement that will be employed (i.e. tests, papers). Assignments, which the instructor includes, should be self-explanatory, since this will eventually determine the amount of additional time and energy required by the faculty member. For instance,

if the instructions are not well-outlined, the student may need to make contact with the instructor before completing the assignements. This time could be more wisely expended in facilitating the learning process.

Multi-Media Instructional Materials

The use of multi-media instructional materials in this program places the student in an active role in this learning situation. "A delivery system without technologies cannot offer instruction that adults need, where they can give it their attention, and at times when they are free to do so."[46] Multi-media instruction equipment needs to be space and time free, also. That is, the equipment must be portable and at the student's disposal throughout his course.

While this is one of the more costly components of the instructional delivery system, it is an essential element. "When the needs and interest of the adult learner are put first, and institutional interests are subordinated, it becomes unmistabably clear that telecommunications technologies have become essential components for the delivery of instruction."[47] Such technologies give the student the option of

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[46] Wesley W. Walton, "New Paths for Adult Learning," Planning Non-Traditional Programs, ed. K. Patricia Cross, John R. Valley & Associates (San Francisco, 1974), p. 97.

[47] Ibid., p. 96.

integrating the use of multi-media equipment into his learning processes. However, the instructor should encourage the student to also go beyond the multi-media instructional materials he has designed specifically for the course, to include pre-recorded tape recordings and other resource materials.

"In order to systematically examine additional delivery modes, two studies are currently under consideration. The first of these utilizes audio cassettes. . . . Another system also being considered is that of cable casting; that is, the use of broadcasting systems via a cable television network."[48] For the external degree student, the use of audio-cassettes and more portable equipment is favored. The use of cable television viewing limits the space and time-free environment the external degree students need. The scheduled times of on-campus courses has prevented their enrollment in the internal program, and to use scheduled television broadcasting would erect a barrier which the external program initially eliminated. However, the use of cable television may be effective in serving rural populations. These individuals need external degree programs because of the commuting distance, and the use of cable television may take the place of on-campus instruction.

A study conducted on the relationships between character-

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[48]John L. Yeager and Diane J. Davis, "The Development of an Instructional Delivery System for External Studies in Higher Education," (Pittsburgh, 1973, ED081318).

istics of adult learners and their responses to learning via multi-media instructional programs indicates other factors to be considered in using multi-media equipment:

> In general, adult learners reacted quite positively to the new mediated approaches to providing college lesson materials. There was, however, enough variation in responses to suggest that key personal characteristics were related to acceptance and achievement. Level of education, enjoyment of educational television, concept of self as a student, thoughts about future education, and past academic achievement were all positively related to responses. The data clearly suggests that variation in responses are also related to the nature of the subject matter.[49]

Thus, the use of multi-media equipment may not meet the needs of everyone enrolling in an external program. As such, the multi-media equipment should be used as supplementary course materials. The use of this equipment, as the study indicated, is not effective with all subject matter. These two factors of adapting to personal learning styles and subject matter, with regard to the use of multi-media equipment and resources, needs to be considered.

Course Completion and Approval

Individual faculty members should not have full control over the completion and approval of their course materials. Courses developed for the external degree program should be

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[49]Robert D. Brown, C. Edward Cavert, James Craig, and Sara Jo Snodgrass, "Adult Learner Characterisitics and their Responsiveness to Multi-Media Instructional Programs Designed for an Open University System," (Nebraska, ED0861588).

scrutinized as thoroughly as new on-campus course offerings. If such policies do not exist, a committee should be established to evaluate external degree program courses. Such a committee should include faculty, administrators, external degree program personnel, and students from the degree-granting institution. The committee should not be limited to inter-institutional personnel, since objectivity may be more accurately established through such a committee.

Facilitation of the Learning Process

The entire role of the "teacher" changes once a faculty member begins to work with external degree students. In an external degree program, the faculty member serves two functions: assistance and assessment. The course needs to be developed around these two ideas, and the role of the facilitator of the learning process begins to take shape. "Learning is not only a function of what a teacher does to or says to or provides for a learner. More significantly, learning has to do with something which happens in the unique world of the learner. It flourishes in a situation in which teaching is seen as a facilitating process that assists people to explore and discover the personal meaning of events for them."[50] The course must also permit the student to be responsible for pursuing the objectives of that particular course. In determining if

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[50]Gerald J. Pine, "Existential Teaching and Learning," Education. Volume 95 (Fall, 1974), p. 20.

the student is understanding the material, the faculty member has to build an additional component of continuous evaluation into his course. "Evaluation can be part of the learning process, providing both the learner and the instructor with information to assess progress to date and to guide additional study. Evaluation also can be a technique to summarize one's level of achievement at a point in time without reference to future study or instruction."[51] Student motivation, through this system, should be maximized, since there will not be a delay for the student in knowing of his progression in the course. This continuous evaluation also provides for the addition of student support services when the need for such becomes apparent. For instance, if an instructor identifies a weakness in writing skills, a tutor can be employed to assist the student. This relieves the frustration experienced by both the instructor and student relevant to the particular problem.

The delivery system that a faculty member chooses to use in developing his course will also affect the success of students who enroll. Courses which call for an active role played by the student will attract and maintain a high degree of motivation among students. To develop this active participation, an instructor may include slides, cassette tapes,

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[51]Ernest W. Kimmel, "Problems of Recognition," Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, ed. Samuel B. Gould and K. Patricia Cross (San Francisco, 1972), p. 67.

laboratory experiments, and other audio-visual equipment. Also, "an active delivery system will need to be built to ensure that the learning of any individual can be evaluated without regard to his geographical location or mobility."[52]

Self-Pacing

Another significant component of the instructional delivery system is the self-pacing of the learning. The optimum would be to allow the student to take whatever time was necessary to complete one course. However, this may mean that students would enroll in a course one year, and not complete it until the following year. The time element involved would tend to indicate that the student's motivation to complete the course has faded. However, circumstances beyond the control of anyone may dictate that the student cannot complete the course within sufficient time (i.e. illness, home responsibilities).

Since most of our elementary and secondary education has not centered on developing independent learners, it is quite difficult for a student to enter a setting where he is forced to establish his own timetable for assignments, examinations, and ultimately course completion. The faculty member developing the course should take this into consideration and provide a framework within which the student can work.

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[52]Kimmel, p. 84.

> The self-paced course, then, allows the content to be learned at differing rates; this approach is significantly more efficient for the student-learner. Now, for possibly the first time in his college career, he can study for and take examinations on content material when he is most ready and not simply because the date for an examination, determined by the instructor, has arrived. When events occur (as they invariably do in any student's life) which make effective study impossible, the student may choose to wait until mastery of the material has occurred.[53]

This component (self-pacing) of the external degree program is essential for student achievement. The student who enters the program has a whole range of other factors influencing his ability to concentrate on his course. The homebound adult or housewife whose child becomes ill cannot devote the necessary time toward a course, and the external degree program offers the flexibility she needs in order to complete her degree, without meeting with failure. Factors such as this are an integral part of the program, and many potential students would be lost if the flexibility of self-pacing were not a component. The attitude of the instructor toward self-pacing is important in terms of his own frustration with the student. If the instructor feels the student should have completed more of the course, or have received higher grades, he may become frustrated working with the student. It is advantageous for the instructor and student to work together in developing a tentative timetable for course assignments and completion. This,

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[53]Robert S. Ruskin, "The Personalized System of Instruction: An Educational Alternative," ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 5 (Washington, D.C., 1974), p. 11.

contract can be re-negotiated at a later date, should circumstances dictate the need for this.

It may be difficult for the instructor to determine if the student's reasons for lack of assignment completion are legitimate, or merely convenient rationale. Since person-to-person contact is not necessary in the external degree program, it is much easier to avoid the confrontation of instructor and student relevant to the completion of course assignments. The role of the instructor in this situation is important. "The facilitating elements which the teacher tries to foster lead to free and open communication, controntation, acceptance, respect, freedom from threat, the right to make mistakes, self-relevation, cooperation, and personal involvement, shared evaluation, and responsibility."[54] Pine's view may represent an ideal picture of the relationship between student and the facilitator of learning, which may not occur even in the external degree program.

Students often feel threatened by instructors, and when the instructor feels he may appear threatening to the student, a program counselor should enter the situation. It may be easier for the student to relate his experiences to a counselor than his instructor, especially since traditional education has not allowed for the instructor to maintain a counseling role. When difficulties exist that indicate the need for a pause in

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[54]Pine, p. 23.

the completion of course or degree requirements, the counselor can arrange for alternative arrangements with the instructor. Since the student is not in danger of missing any valuable instruction during this pause, a liberal attitude needs to be taken in allowing the student to continue work on the course at a later date (determined by the circumstances involved). Here, the counselor plays the role of student advocate. In the classroom, the other students offer support for classmates. However, the external degree program does not incorporate the need for the classroom; and, the role of peers in that setting needs to be assumed by someone in the student support service area of the external degree program.

Evaluation of Student Learning

While the instructor has had to develop new ways of delivery of his instructional materials, he must also seek alternatives to his evaluation of the student's achievement. The person-to-person contact the instructor traditionally felt was necessary is no longer relevant. The evaluation of the student needs to take new forms, and more options need to be available to the student. Supplementary instructional materials need to be developed to further explain difficult subject areas to a student. For instance, the student who is experiencing some difficulty in understanding a principle of accounting, may receive additional assignments relevant to this one principle to promote better understanding of the course material. He

can proceed through originally assigned materials. This personalizes the system for the student, and increases his ability to obtain a higher grade in the course. "The ideally successful personalized course would have all students earning and receiving A's, simply because they have all learned the course material expected of them, and have proved their learning by their test performance."[55]

Student Withdrawl and Failure

Faculty and student support service personnel in the external degree program should also anticipate a relatively high proportion of course withdrawls. Once a student has begun to work in his course, he will know whether he has the motivation to complete the work independently. If the student does not take any action toward resolving this, he may become very frustrated and terminate his work on course assignments. It is difficult for student to admit that he does not have the motivation and stamina to complete a course——especially in light of his previous educational experiences. When this occurs, he may not respond to telephone calls and letters concerning his course. This is an important area through which the student support services can be of value.

Course and Instructor Evaluation

The impact that the instructor in the external degree program has on the student may differ completely from that

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[55]Ruskin, p. 15.

impact with on-campus students. Programs may find that faculty who do not receive excellent evaluations from their on-campus students will appear highly succcesful in the external degree program. Also, faculty who appear to be popular on campus, may tend to rate lower in the evaluation by external students This may be related to several factors. First, the instructor may not be able to articulate his ideas and materials in the classroom through lectures. However, he is able to relate to the external degree students on a different level, where he feels more comfortable. Faculty who are favored on campus may not be able to relate to the external degree student, not because of the lack of face-to-face interaction, but because they develop other on-campus commitments, as a result of being favored. Therefore, he may not have sufficient time to work with the external student. Continual course and instructor evaluation is necessary to determine which faculty are effective in the external degree program, and those who are not suited for the program. Screening is necessary, not only for students, but for faculty as well. This is the only way of maintaining high student quality standards within the program. While the objectivity of faculty evaluations may be questioned by some, one study indicated that "to the extent to which they are already in use in colleges and universities——they appear generally to have a sufficient impact to warrent their continued use as one method of improving college teaching."[56]

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[56]John A. Centra, "Do Student Ratings Improve Instructors?" Change Magazine (Volume 5, Number 3, (April 1973).

The use of continual evaluation of all aspects of the program is especially important when assessing new programs. Specifically, the student feedback that is receive through course evaluations may not only lead to course improvements, but programmatic improvements as well. New programs may be more proned to accept improvement suggestions, since methods employed in new programs may not have been previously used. The use of innovations in new programs appears to be higher at initial inception, and this may be related to the funds used to begin and develop the program. When external funds are institutèd (such as grants), program personnel will want to take advantage of all the money budgeted to developing innovative processes.

THE ROLE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to the necessity for high quality with instructional materials, it is equally important to maintain an entire range of student support services for the external student. Such services need to be equal to or greater than those offered to internal degree students. The success of the program may be contingent on the development and use of' these services. Individualized attention, not only through instruction, but also through the external degree program office; and, services it provides will assure the student that he is receiving the quality education that he needs and deserves.

Student Selection and Registration

The difficulty related to the selection of students is minimized, if the goals and objectives of the external degree program are explicit. The program must identify that population it wishes to serve, and enroll students based on this criteria. It is essential that this criteria also be tied in with the admission policy, which is adopted for the program. The selection of highly motivated individuals is also a fundamental requisite for course completion.

Three questions, relevant to the above, need to be addressed when selecting students for the external program:

1. Is this student within the designated populations we wish to serve with this program? (i.e. handicapped, homebound)
2. Has this student met the admission policy criteria for enrollment? (i.e. high school graduate, GED certificate)
3. Is this a highly motivated individual who will be able to work independently through his degree program? (i.e. will seek student support services when in need of such, will contact the instructor when experiencing difficulty with his work).

Of these three questions, the third is the most abstract and difficult with which to work. "The effort to initiate and carry through a degree plan requires will, stamina, and a

degree of ability far greater than that needed to indicate the desire to do so."[57] It is difficult to determine if the student has the stamina to do this, in addition to the desire to obtain the degree externally.

Student Motivation

There are a few areas to be considered when determining student motivation. Initially, the external degree program should be publicized in the news media, so the general public is aware of the service. Beyond this, it is of necessity to determine how far the program wishes to reach out to these people in offering additional information. This should be incorporated with the initial planning stages, in the discussion of goals and objectives.

Within the degree program's service area, information should be disseminated. Brochures can be distributed through bulk mail with a section that can be returned, if the individual wishes to receive additional information. Once this request is received, a catalog or other pertinent information can be sent. The additional information should include what procedures the individual must follow for registration. This is the extent to which the program should extend itself. If the individual does not follow the process for registration on his own, he would probably not be highly motivated enough to complete a course or degree program externally. The

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[57]Houle, The External Degree, p. 150.

external degree program should not actively initiate the contact with these people for registration. The self-initiating individual will make the proper contacts for registration, once he is aware of the service. In this way, he shows his motivation toward course and degree completion.

In support of this contention, K. Patricia Cross and J. Quentin Jones indicate:

> Two major elements that contribute to an individual's knowledge about educational opportunity are his own motivation and the actual availability of educational opportunities in his community. These factors are by no means independent. The actual availability of educational facilities in the community increases awareness and heightens interest. . . . The relationship between availability and motivation also works the other way around. The influx of well-educated people into a community is quite likely to increase the educational offers available by increasing the demand for such services.[58]

If the external degree program can indicate that is has provided the knowledge of the program to the community, then the rest is up to the individuals who will seek the external program. It would be a disservice to the individual involved to enroll low motivated individuals in an external degree program, who will only meet with frustration and failure, because of their lack of self-motivation.

"In considering motivation, the nature of a particular external degree program helps to define the reasons why its

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[58]Cross and Jones, Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, p. 53.

students attend. It has been established that the motives which lead adults to learn cannot be inferred from the content they study."[59]

Reasons for Enrollment

The question arises as to whether the motives of external degree students are the same or different from those of internal degree students. While younger people may be pressured into entering higher education by parents and peers, their desire for entering a profession, and the personal achievement they which to obtain are also influential factors. Cross and Jones cite change in factors relevant to reasons for seeking higher education:

> Likewise, the reasons for continued learning vary from group to group. Job-centered reasons are primary among younger people, whereas the goals of older adults are much less pragmatic and utilitarian. In 1961, when the study was conducted, men were more likely than women to express vocational motivations; today, however, education for job advancement may play an increasingly important role in the educational motivations of women. Socioeconomic status is also an important variable in educational motivation. Men and women from lower socioeconomic levels are much more likely to take courses to prepare for new jobs than to advance in present one, whereas, the opposite is true for those from higher socioeconomic levels.[60]

The reason of enrollment involving professional achievement may even be more prominant within the past few years. The high rate of unemployment has forced people to turn to

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[59] Houle, The External Degree, p. 150.

[60] Cross and Jones, Explorations in Non-Traditional Study, p. 51.

new types of professions, and to carefully consider the outlook for the job market within their area of interest. This includes the projection of job availability at least two to four years in the future. The Occupational Outlook Handbook is an excellent reference for students who have not defined their career objectives, and are concerned about the future job market.[61] This resource can be used in conjunction with the career development center and vocational counseling services, which are to be incorporated within the external degree program system.

The type of motivation that a student has for seeking an external degree will also be related to his success within the program. If the individual is only concerned with finding a well-paying position, his motivation toward degree completion may decrease once he has obtained employment—even if the employment is not within the area for which he initially indicated an interest. Those individuals seeking to achieve a personal goal as their sole motivation, or in congruence with a professional goal will become increasingly concerned with reaching that goal—regardless of other external factors.

There does not appear to be a consensus in the literature relevant to the effect of age on motivation. While it may be assumed from previous passages that older students may have

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[61]U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Bulletin 1785, (Washington, 1974-75 ed.)

different reasons for enrollment in external degree programs which raises their motivation level, there is no concrete evidence that success in an external degree program is related to age. Ernest L. Boyer has indicated that "... . some fear that more flexible programs for older people will somehow reduce quality, but I am convinced quite the opposite is true. Older students are highly motivated. They are often more diligent and more sure of where they want to go."[62] While this contention may be valid in some instances, it is not relevant as a sweeping generalization; and, the author does not appear to be using it in this vein. Students need to be assessed individually.

The entire area of student motivation in external degree programs needs to be investigated extensively. The quality of students accepted into the external degree program will be related to their degree of motivation and self-initiation. The program will be judged, both within the degree-granting institution and outside of the institution, on the ability of students to complete the course requirements. Yet, a highly reliable measure of student motivation prior to enrollment does not exist. This motivation is more easily noted once the student has enrolled, in terms of the quality and quantity of work completed, but a method for predetermination of this should be established. This would prevent frustration among

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[62] Ernest L. Boyer, "Breaking Up the Youth Ghetto," Lifelong Learners-A New Clientele For Higher Education ed. Dyckman W. Vermilye, (San Francisco, 1974), p. 10.

students, instructors, and support service personnel in the external degree program.

Maintaining A High Quality of Students

Especially through the first few years of the operation of the external degree program, it is significant to maintain a high quality of students with regard to selection and continuation for the program. The scrutiny the program receives initially will eventually decrease, as it becomes more widely-accepted; but, during this initial phase, it is necessary to screen students carefully. Those skeptics, who would not support the plan for the external degree program, will constantly have their attention focused on any area of weakness within the program structure. Since student motivation and selection are highly subjective areas, they should receive a high priority within the program. This is one of the most significant reasons for employing the person responsible for student selection early in the planning process. His input and experience relevant to non-traditional students will be invaluable to the program. Through total integration of this individual in the planning and developmental phases, the program will be able to maintain a high degree of quality and consistency.

Intellectual Ability Determination

"The results of research show that individuals in external degree programs are often equal or superior in intellectual capacity to individuals in internal degree programs."[63] How is this determined prior to enrollment? Unless standardized testing is used, this is another slippery area. The student can be subjected to a battery of tests designed to indicate a level of intellectual capacity; however, should this be the sole mearsurement in determining the acceptance of the student within the external degree program? While such measurements may be of assisstance in assessing some aspects of an individual's ability, his self-motivation may far exceed the projections of these tests.

Avoiding Depersonalization

> Some danges of depersonalization extists with external degree programs, particularly if students are removed geographically from access to mentors and counselors. At the present time, virtually all directors of new programs are carefully hand-picking their students, offering them elaborate counseling and guidance, providing introductory services to help them achieve or regain learning skills and reestablish confidence in their educational abilities, and setting up banks of data concerning backgrounds and accomplishments.[64]

The use of standardized testing will develop and/or increase the sense of depersonalization. The one-to-one relationship the student receives throughout the program is

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[63] Houle, The External Degree, p. 155.

[64] Ibid., p. 161.

important to his continue motivation and success. To depersonalize the system would be to forfeit the necessary component of quality

The continuation of "handpicking" of students and the provision of student support services are keys to program success. While this area is of a subjective nature, this is only way to adequately serve the students. If the process is depersonalized, the tendency to view the program as a "degree mill" may prevail. The quality of students enrolled must be a priority over the quantity of students enrolled. It is quite easy for a new external degree program to try to interest as many people as possible; but, as indicated earlier, boundaries need to be established. Meeting the potential students half-way is important. You can spread the information regarding the program, but you cannot motivate the students——this must come from within the individual.

THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Students who enroll in an external degree program should be able to use the same or equal services offered to on-campus students. Of great importance here is the use of personal and academic counseling services. "The broader experience of adults, their motivation for learning, and their freedom from compulsory schooling not only distinguish them from younger students but, together with the distinctive educational problems of adults, may call for specialized guidance and counsel-

ing."[65] Among the reasons that individuals choose an external degree programs is the responsibilities of a home and family, which necessitates constant care. With these responsibilities comes the day-to-day difficulties that may arise unexpectedly, and hinder an individual's prograss within the external degree program. At this time, the external degree course acts as an additional difficulty to which the student must react. The entire range of student support services is built on the premise of serving the student's best interest. These services can work to alleviate this additional difficulty.

Counseling

It is important for the counselor to step in at this point and offer assistance. This individual may also be the same person responsibile for student selection. This limits the number of people with whom the student must share his personal life. In this way, confidentiality can be maintained, and the student can develop a consistent relationship with one program staff member.

Personal concerns may necessity a pause in course completion requirements, or the need for additional support services before the student can continue. The counselor should be able to offer tutoring services to the student who is experiencing

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[65]Janet Ruyle and Lucy A. Geiselman, "Non-Traditional Opportunities and Program," Planning Non-Traditional Programs, ed. K. Patricia Cross and John R. Valley, (San Francisco, 1974) p. 58.

academic difficulties, and consistent counseling services for personal concerns. This need for continued support is exemplified as follows:

> Although the term "counseling" has been used to describe the process for maximizing the fit between students and educational opportunities, counselors and guidance personnel have typically concentrated on informing students of available opportunities; they have rarely played an active role in adjusting the environment to the needs of the students. Because the duality of the process is vital, we shall emphasize the point by using the concepts of "communication" and "flow of information" rather than the more traditional concept of counseling.[66]

However the service is described, it is still a component which needs a high priority. This service may be provided by a variety of individuals involved in the program. While such responsibilities may ultimately be required of the appointed counselor, the faculty member may also play a significant counseling role.[67]

Don F. Vickers has delineated three models which describe the role of the external degree counselor: 1) The tutor or mentor relationship; 2) The full-time academic counselor; and 3) The peer counselor.[68] A combination of all three of these models would be ideal. However, this may not always be feasible. The incorporation of existing institutional services is important at this level, in order to maximize the use of existing services.

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[66] Cross and Jones, p. 53.

[67] Ruyle and Geiselman, p. 83.

[68] Don F. Vickers, "The Learning Consultant: A Response To the External Degree Learner," Journal of Higher Education XLIV, Number 6, (June 1973), pp. 440-1.

Assessing Learning Styles

The counselor, or person responsible for student selection and registration may also take on another role within the external degree program. "Now as counselors assume more and more of the role of consultant to classroom teachers, it becomes the responsibility of the counselor to know how learning styles can be assessed, and what adjustments in classroom management and instruction will be necessary to optimize the student's learning performance and consequently his self-concept."[69] Since each instructor will develop a course with a completely unique approach, it is important for the counselor to understand each instructional material package. In this way, the counselor can adapt the program to the particular learning needs and style of the student. For example, a student who appears to need or desire some form of traditional lecture material, may be placed in a course where the instructor has developed a series of taped lectures for student use. The student's ability to succeed in this program may be closely tied to his needs and expectaions. The counselor, as the student advocate, should work toward fulfilling these.

Academic Tutoring

Students should receive academic tutoring from individuals

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[69]Len Sperry, "Counselors and Learning Styles," Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 51, No. 7, (March 1973), p. 478.

who tutor on-campus students, at a place and time designated by the external degree program student. In this sense, the inter-institutional services must be flexible enough to allow this deviation from the norm.

Care should be used in matching students with tutors, to increase the probability of the learning experience being meaningful. When possible, academic areas, age, and sex should be factors in matching students and tutors. "Nothing would be more salutary, I think, then to develop the kind of learning society in which the able academician but poor mechanic exchanges tutoring services with the slow reader but good mechanic. Each would be teaching in his area of excellence and learning in his area of proposed competence."[70]

The need for non-traditional places for tutoring will also be needed. That is, the tutor may go to the student's home, or meet him in the public library close to the student's home. Thus, the individuals involved in tutoring need to be as flexible as the service itself.

Community-Based Learning Centers

Resources need to be available to all external degree students, regardless of their geographic location. The students need to become aware of the extent to which these services can assist them, and how to use them effectively.

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[70]K. Patricia Cross, "New Forms for New Functions," Lifelong Learners——A New Cleintele For Higher Education, ed. Dyckman W. Vermilye, (San Francisco, 1974), p. 51.

For the local service area, a pamphlet can be developed to indicate to the student the community-based learning centers which cooperate with the external degree program. Non-traditional programs, and especially external degree programs need to expand in this area. The potential for the student in broadening his knowledge through these centers may also increase his activity and/or support relative to other community projects.

Evaluation of Learning Locations

When the Commission on Non-Traditional Study evaluated the use of alternative locations to learning, their findings indicated the following:

PRINCIPAL LOCATION OF LEARNING
IN NON-TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS*

Location	Percent
Main Campus	35
Regional learning or extension center	13
In the field	13
Business or industrial site	7
Community center, agency, or library	6
Home	5
Other Location	10
Multiple locations	11

* [71]Commission on Non-Traditional Study, Diversity By Design, (San Francisco, 1974), p. 69.

The facility used most often, according to this table, is still the main campus. The centers with the most potential for serving the greatest number of students are used the least. The public library is an invaluable resource in our communities. "It exists in great numbers, possesses the materials of knowledge, has a public service staff, and is a referral point to other resources within the educational network."[72]

Coordination: The coordination of the external degree program system with these centers should be included in the developmental phases of the program. When entered at this level, instructors can receive in-service programs relative to the use of these centers; and, they can in turn encourage their students to use these facilities. Through this coordination, instructors can develop a plan with the student for taking his examination, completing course work, and studying at these centers, where the essential resource tools are readily available. A person designated as coordinator of the external degree program at the learning centers can then keep a file with all of the student's examinations. When the student is ready to take an examination, he can just go to the center at his convenience, and have it proctored. When the student is homebound, examination can be administered there at his convenience, by program personnel.

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[72]Commission on Non-Traditional Study, Diversity By Design, (San Francisco, 1974), p. 69.

For the housewife, the off-campus learning center can be a life saver. While her child is attending kindergarten during the morning, she can walk to the public library and study her course material in a refreshing and stimulating atmosphere. If space permits, it is advantageous to establish an area or room in the learning center specifically designated for the external degree program students. In this way, students can meet each other, share common experiences, and possibly assist each other with understanding their courses. To further assist with the development of these relationships, mini-courses, informal coffee hours, and similar types of gatherings can be scheduled at the learning centers. A brief reading or writing skills clinic may be offered one day, with continuous sessions morning, noon, and night. This would provide interaction among students who do not attend on-campus classes because of a time conflict.

Proctoring

Proctoring of examinations should be the responsibility of arrangements made through the student support system. The faculty's role of assistance and assessment does not include proctoring of examinations. However, if the faculty member wants to increase his personal contact with the student in this way, he should be encouraged to do so.

Libraries offer a good environment for administering examinations. Service hours usually begin in the morning and continue throughout the day and into the evening. This means

the student does not have to establish an examination time, since library personnel will be able to administer the examination at any time.

The instructor should ultimately determine if the proctor is qualified and reliable. For students who cannot take advantage of learning center services because of commuting distance, securing of a qualified proctor should be their responsibility. Libraries should be suggested to the student as a good place to seek proctoring services. These service centers, regardless of prior arrangements with the external degree program, are usually glad to assist students in this manner.

Financial Aid

Adaptation: In terms of adaptation of the existing institution to the external degree program, financial aid may initially be a weak area. The financial aid system has traditionally been designed with the full-time student in mind. Since some financial assistance is offered through federal and state funds, the problem involves not only a reconsideration of the use of institutional money, but also the entire student financial aid system on the local, state, and federal levels. While this may be the ideal approach, a more readily accessible alternative is that of committing some of institutional funds for external degree institutions.

Restructuring: Under a restructuring of the entire financial aid system, "a student would get no more or no less

in the way of grants and loans because he chose one instead of the other mode of study."[73] However, need may also be calculated in terms of more subjective areas——as costs incurred with on-campus class attendance. In order for external degree students to receive equal consideration of similar subjective areas (i.e. the traveling to and from examinations, learning center use). A thorough integration of this support service into the planning and development of the external degree program, may promote a better understanding of the programmatic components. This would then provide a framework for the integration of financial aid for the external student on an equal basis.

Alternatives: The introduction of increased financial support for part-time students (specifically the external student), should be integrated into the institution at other levels as well. The Alumni group, who may already generate financial support for on-campus students, may find this idea particularly appealing. As such, they may personally generate financial support, and make the same suggestion to other alumni. These individuals may also be able to develop innovative ideas for their ability to offer further assistance in this area.

Deferred Payment: There may be a greater potential student interest in external degree programs if other payment of course options were available. This could include deferred payment, so the student could pay for his course after he has already

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[73] Bowen, Journal of Higher Education, p. 490.

completed some part of the course. Since it is important to serve the external student when he is most highly motivated such arrangements need to be available for the student whose desire to enroll in the program would meet an immediate need.

Credit Card Charges: For students who need to pay for their courses through monthly installments, arrangements need to be made with the institution's controller for a policy regarding this. A more desirable option may be to coordinate a procedure with major credit card companies, so students could charge their courses to their credit accounts through these companies. Through this option, the institution will receive their reimbursement from the company directly, and the responsibility for collection of this money will lie with the credit card company.

Transfer

The accreditation of the external degree program becomes increasingly more important when a student transfers to another institution. The continuity of the external degree program, with the existing internal program, assures the student that from external to internal programs at different institutions will be facilitated easily. "The fact that virtually all institutuons of higher learning came to use the same general academic accounting systems and degree criteria meant that one could accumulate credit by study at several different

campuses. . ."[74] This flexibility must be maintained with the external degree program as well. To facilitate this, transcripts for internal and external students would remain identical. If the student has been involved with both internal and external programs at the same institution, only one transcript should be maintained. If the external program has been established on the premise that the quality of instruction is equal internally and externally, the application of this premise should indicate the need for only one transcript and records system.

To ease the acceptance of this external program among local colleges and universities, the program personnel need to discuss the external program with admissions offices and interested personnel at these transfer institutions. One particular area of concern among these institutions (especially in private institutions) is the quality of the student in the external degree program. They would like to know if these external students are as well-qualified for transfer as internal students may be. Through a thorough program description, the necessity of self-motivation among external students will be noted. These individuals may tend to be more qualified than the internal students, because of the higher degree of motivation and self-initiative necessary for achievement in the external program.

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[74] Houle, The External Degree, p. 5.

Accessibility of Instructional Materials

For the student who is homebound, or does not live within commuting distance of the institution or external degree program office, instructional materials should be made available through the mail. A nominal fee can be assessed for this service to support the cost of mailing. This service should include the mailing of books, paper and pen supplies, library resource materials, multi-media equipment, and laboratory kits. Students may pay in advance or be billed for the cost of instructional materials which they will keep. However, the multi-media, library resources, and laboratory materials should be loaned out for the duration of the course, at no expense to the student.

Special arrangements for extended library resource material loans may need to be made, primarily because of the time involved in shipping of these materials. Since each student's pace is different in the external program, provisions need to be established for the return of materials within pre-established boundaries. This may be accomplished by one of three means:

1. Contract: The student would be required to establish a contract with the library for a date by which the materials must be returned. This pre-determined date must be agreeable to both the library and student.
2. Re-Call: By placing the materials on a re-call list after the expiration of the loan period. Once the expiration date occurs, and another request for the

material has been received, the student would be given notification to return the materials within a grace period without charge.

3. Extended Loan Periods: A special policy regarding the extended and continued use of resource materials could be implemented. This would allow external degree students to have as many resource materials out on loan for as long as necessary.

The external degree student should not be assessed additional costs for use of learning center materisl which will be returned, since he would have to use similar equipment to satisfy course requirements on campus. While a despoit may need to be instituted for check out of multi-media equipment, such a step should come only after the voluntary return of equipment has failed.

Collegiate Identity

Since the external degree student may never see the college which grants them their degree, the identification with the institution remains minimal. "Recognizing that students consider contact with tutors and other students as important is not the same as understanding why. Possibly, the reason was not that interaction resulted in more learning (although it may have), but that it created an atmosphere or attitude conducive to learning."[75] To increase the potential for this interaction

[75]Rodney T. Hartnett, "Adult Learners and New Faculty Roles," Findings, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1974), p. 2 .

to occur, the incorporation of a logo identifying the program can be promoted with program students. This can be facilitated by enclosing a window sticker or key chain bearing the logo with the student's books and supplies received through the mail or in person. If such a project is successful on a small scale, larger items can be offered with the insignia.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

As with courses in the external degree program, the entire range of program serves needs continual evaluation. The student input from this evaluation will lead the program in many new and differing directions, to meet the needs of students not previously considered. When and where possible, students should be able to volunteer (or be selected) to participate on an evaluation team for the program. Such a team would include students, instructors, administrators, and learning center coordinators.

Cyril O. Houle has classified two tests the program needs to apply: "One is an estimate of the product of the system: Does the person certified for the degree actually have the knowledge, skill, and sensitiveness which possession of the degree implies? Another test. . .rests on what economists call a 'value-added' concept. How effectively in terms of its stated aims has a degree program influenced the students whom it accepted?"[76] One of the areas of concern with

[76]Houle, The External Degree, pp. 77-8.

this is that is is an "after the fact" type of evaluation. If the program answers "no" to these questions, where does that leave the student? This evaluation format is, however, significant in evaluation over a long period of time to assess the program's validity.

An abstract consideration of evaluation is resented by Marien: "A further modification that may increasingly be justified by the learning society of the future would be an assessment of institutions and programs by their contribution to an individual's capacity to learn--an outcome that may be valued even more than contributions to an individual's knowledge and skills."[77] A determination of this "capacity to learn" would require extensive research and planning before initiation of this evaluation technique.

Criteria for Evaluation

John A. Valentine has established four criteria which are significant to the evaluation of the external degree program:

> The first is the extent to which the program reaches out to serve people now lacking access to the kind of education they need and seek. The second is flexibility, an important aspect of which is the opportunity for individualized learning that draws on a wide variety of relevant resources. The third is quality--quality of counseling, quality of instructional materials and experience, and quality of assessment. The fourth is financial soundness.[78]

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[77] Marien, p. 26.

[78] Valentine, Liberal Education, p. 209.

This presentation has drawn on the assessment of all of these criteria. Not only are the instructional resources and facilitators of learning important to the quality of the program; but, "it is predictable that many of the users of external degree program will require a breadth of counseling and advisement not ordinarily available through more traditional educational counseling centers."[79] The financial soundness of the program will assure contintuation and credibility of the program.

EFFECT OF THE EXTERNAL DEGREE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

What affect will the development of external degree programs have on traditional higher education? The import of reaching out to serve the needs of all community residents is evidenced by the success of community colleges, which have adopted the offering of non-credit courses which have open admissions policies. Private institutions, in feeling the economic problems of this decade, have begun to open their doors to a wider population through more flexible scheduling and course audits by the public. While increased enrollments may not be the sole motivation for these new options, the effect this will have on the institutions is important to all of higher education's philosophy, goals, and objectives.

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[79]Vickers, p. 439.

CONCLUSION

With the rise in interest in the development of external degree programs, interested individuals need to seek the assistance of programs which have already been in existence, In this way, new programs will be able to apply the experiences of other programs to their own surroundings. The result will be more widespread initial support, and an emphasis on effective planning, and de-emphasis on problem solving.

Resource material that has been generated in relation to the external degree has been much too general. An article in a periodical on developing external degree programs cannot offer the information necessary for program planning. Even a more complete review of the literature would probably not provide the background for program development. There is a need for a more "cookbook" type of reference source for individuals who may become involved in planning an external degree program. These type of references will need to come from external degree program personnel who have had some hands-on experience in the programs. The practical application of their findings will aid in the process of emphasizing effective planning, and the de-emphasis on problem solving.

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